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the hazards of inheritance account sufficiently for the meaningless grouping of neighbours.

The names of the villages on either side of the river Talung are accounted for by the following oft-repeated etymological myth:

'On any clear day there is visible from Lingthem a large gendarme of black rock rising from the mountain Siniolchi, or, as it is called in Lepcha, Sanyol-koong. On that gendarme there lived once upon a time a devil called Lassoo-fo *moong* (the Lassoo bird devil). This devil was a man-eater; he used to capture people all through the neighbourhood and take them away to Tibet where he would kill and eat them. Therefore the Gods Kansi *thing* (lord), Kom-yo *thing* and Saktsum *thing* consulted together as to how they could kill this demon. They tried to find a man who was capable, but they could not do so. They then went to the caterpillar *pi-sik-bu* who gnaws trees so that they become hollow and fall down, and they told him to go and cut down the tree in that place.[3] The caterpillar agreed and hollowed the tree so that it fell down, after which the demon had no place to live and went wandering about. Then the three gods sent for Rum-nam (a mythological hero) to kill the demon, and wherever the demon went Rum-nam followed.

'The demon went down the Talung valley and came to Sakyong (so called because Tag-kyong-ka was killed there), Pantoong, Thong-to, Lavén, Tangvoong, Lungdeum (where he killed children), A-dong, Ling-them (*tem-la tem-la taa*: he ate each in turn): the village opposite is called Liklyang, the place of crying, because people cried out from there.[4] Rum-nam chased him and eventually overtook him at Lasso-tsong-nyong, in the Teesta valley to the west, and there killed him and scattered his flesh over the land. From this scattered flesh arose leeches and mosquitoes, and the small predatory bird *kar-hu-fo*. His bones turned into stone, and at the place where he was slain there is a huge stone which can be seen to this day.'

Except for questions of the size of the population and the fertility of the land and some minor details of internal administration,

[3] There is a verbal confusion here between the various meanings of the word *koong*—(1) mountain peak, and (2) tree, worked wood, and finally house-pillar. There are obviously no trees on the gendarme which is well above the snow level. However I heard this story repeated several times in identical terms.

[4] All the other village names have etymological derivations from the same legend, but it seems unnecessary to give them all.

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there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

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favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-*zel oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

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feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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the tips of the *shang-no* tree, but of that tree only." The daughter went and gathered the twigs and put them into her mother's lap. Then the mother said "If I can cover the sun with these twigs I can go all over the world. Watch what I do." Then she went out on to the verandah and threw up the twigs, so that the sun was covered and she would be able to go all over the world. Then she returned to the house and said to her daughter "You had better go soon, for your maternal uncles will be coming to look for my body. They will take away three bags of jewels and only leave you three tiny necklaces; but wear those and look after them. They will take all the cattle and only leave you one baby calf; look after that. Do not be sad, for in seven days a man will come and marry you, and your children will be *Jem-mi* (that is Mandal) of this place. Now go away." The daughter did as she was told.

'When morning broke the brothers came to fetch the corpse, but they could see nothing; only there was a trail of blood leading to a lake situated above a big tree, and behind that a cliff with a door in it. The mother entered that cliff and there she *munthen* (performed the religious contemplation of the Mun) for seven days.

'Meanwhile the brothers had divided the property just as had been prophesied; and the girl stayed with her calf and her three small necklaces in the shed; and in seven days a hunter arrived and lived with her and married her. This hunter was named Tsel-telim, and from him the Tsel-telim *ptso* sprang.[4]

'For seven days the mother *munthen* and at last she summoned the devils from their home; she vowed vengeance on all who had great wealth or many children and she sent out the devils. These devils are called Ginoo *moong pan-di* ('Queen devil Ginoo') after the name of the murderers, and Lingthem *anyou* ('Lady Lingthem') after the place of the murder.

'Within one year all the huge family had died and the door of their house was closed. Lower down in the valley was another family which had ten married sons and ten married daughters. These too Ginoo *moong* attacked and killed, all except two women called Safi and Sakyon who were weeding the distant fields. But as they were weeding they heard a voice saying "I want Safi." "I want Sakyon." The next morning when they woke up in the field house they both had elephantiasis and quickly died.

[4] See Chapter Five, p. 127. Serving is the last survivor of this *ptso* in the neighbourhood.

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'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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been a reason for, a general gathering of all the members of the *ptso*. A traveller among strange people has no claim on the hospitality of unknown members of his *ptso*, though it would still be shameful for two members of the same *ptso* to have sexual connection. More than anything else, the *ptso* is a device for the prevention of incest.

iii

Incest for the Lepchas is horrifying; they do not call it a sin but *nam-toak*, an act which produces a year of disaster for the community. Sin is a lamaist conception and is on the whole only applied to acts like the killing of animals; *nam-toak* is the phrase used for personal acts which are felt to be strongly anti-social. Any sexual connection with blood relations for nine generations on the father's side and four on the mother's is considered incestuous; but children under the age of puberty, or, as the Lepchas say ' who are not old enough to know shame ', are not considered capable of committing incest and no watch is kept on children's play. Besides blood relations sexual connection with the following relations-by-marriage is considered as incestuous: for a man to sleep with any of the women he calls ' mother-in-law ' or ' daughter-in-law ' (that is his wife's mother, his wife's elder sister, the wife of his wife's elder brother, and his sons' wives, the wives of his *younger* brothers, and the wives of his brothers' and sisters' sons); for a woman, to sleep with any of the men she calls ' father-in-law ' or ' son-in-law ' (that is her husband's father, her husband's *elder* brothers, the husband of her husband's elder sister, and her daughter's husbands, the husbands of her younger sisters, and the husbands of her brothers' and sisters' daughters). Such relationships, besides causing a year of disaster to the community, would call down a devil on to the guilty couple who would cover them with sores. Should children result from such a union they would be allowed to live, but they would either be of an evil mind or idiots, and would be short-lived.

No cases of mother-son or father-daughter incest are known of; nor does the situation occur in any mythological story. Brother-sister incest on the other hand is a motive in a great deal of Mun mythology, inevitably so, for the world and all that therein is are the children of Itpomu the Creative Mother. The origin of devils and noxious animals arises from the incest of her first two ' human ' children (if I can so express it) Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*. I only heard of one case of true brother-sister incest, and that

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my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today.

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein.

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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773 539 married, and as a consequence all their children were devils and snakes and lizards. As soon as they were born their mother cast them aside without giving them milk. Finally she produced a normal child called Rilbu Shingbu whom she nursed; but when the devils saw this child getting the milk that had been denied them they were jealous and they took counsel and killed the child. Their incest was betrayed by the dog who guarded the door. When the parents were shamed and the child killed they buried the child in the black rock on the right of the Talung valley, which can be seen to this day, and thereafter in disgust they divided their property and separated. Komsi*thing* went to Tibet and he took with him all the riches and jewels and animals which the Tibetans have till this day. Narzong-*nyou* turned towards our country but she was careless and that is why our country is so poor.

'After that Komsi*thing* summoned all the devils to him and all came except Doam *moong* who is the devil of leprosy, and he counselled the devils and said to them "You are devils and you must act according to your nature; but you must take an oath that when men are born you will accept them if they give you pigs and oxen and rice and other things to eat; if you are looked after you must go away, you must obey the Mun and Padem and the sacrificer". They all took this oath except Doam *moong* who was not present and that is the reason why you can never drive him away and leprosy cannot be cured.

'But still there was no Mun; Itpomu had placed all the devils in the big plain Azum Patham; but there they had nothing to eat. So then Itpomu created the Mun spirit and sent her to feed them. When the Mun arrived at Azum Patham she said to the devils "You are older than I am and I am helpless; I will return to Itpomu". But the devils begged her to stay, saying that if she went away they would always be hungry; if she stayed they would promise to obey her. They swore this by three great oaths; first they cut their finger nails and swore on them: then they spat on the Kashou tree and the tree withered, finally they spat in the sea and the sea dried up. Since that time the Mun must find out what sacrifices are needed and give them to the devils and the devils will always obey them.'

773 539 581 The other important story for which *loong* has to be obtained before it can be publicly repeated is the story of the *Origin of Marriage*. With its internal repetitions and lists of names it takes between two and three hours to repeat; it is always repeated

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verbatim, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

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all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.'

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations.

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for

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APPENDIX IV

THE SACRED STORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

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(This is one of the two Lepcha stories which can only be recited by those people who have obtained the ceremonial qualification or *loong*. The other story is the long Mun genesis (see Chapter Eight, p. 223) of which the greater part consists of a long catalogue of names.

The sacred story of the origin of marriage has to be repeated in its entirety by the officiant at each marriage. It takes between two and three hours to rehearse, owing to the innumerable internal repetitions and culminations which I have indicated in brackets. Nearly every paragraph is repeated twice, and some many times more.)

When Itpomu had completed creation there were no husbands and wives. The last person she bore was a son called Tarbong-bo whom she nursed. When the child grew big enough to work he told his mother that he would like to travel and see the world. His mother said "No, you are too young" but he insisted, and so she cooked some rice for him and put it into his knapsack. So the next morning he travelled by the road called Parhi Pageun and came to the top of Paki Chu; from there he went down to Palyang Chu, which is a mountain above Sakhyong and can be seen on a clear day. From there he saw the *palit samper koong* tree covered with fruits, and *pedong*, *taryong athyak kanyoong* and many other birds eating the fruit. When he saw that he sat down and ate his rice; then he returned home in the evening and climbed on to his mother's lap and sucked her milk. His mother then asked "What did you see?" He told her what he had seen (*verbal repetition*). Then his mother said "If you are my son you must go and get *yongming yongsong* (which is a kind of bamboo) and the thread *komok ki* (to make traps)." That night he slept at home and the next day he went and got what his mother had said, cutting down the bamboos and returned home. The day after that he went back to Palyang Chu and made snares with the threads and set them on the trees and returned and climbed on his mother's lap and told her what he had done. His mother told him that he must go back early in the morning. He did so and found all the different sorts of birds caught in the snares, so many that they made a full load. When he had collected the birds he reset the snares and then went home and said to his mother "Mother, if these birds are good to eat, eat them and take them as my repayment for your milk: if they are no good, throw them away." Itpomu replied "They are good to eat: and I accept them as a recompense for my milk."

The next morning Tarbong returned to the tree, but instead of birds in the traps he found in every trap a penis, exactly like real life, made out of wood.

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Tarbong was angry at this, threw the penises away, and reset the traps. Then he went home and climbed on to his mother's lap and said "Mother, today I have nothing to bring you; there were no birds in the traps, just penises of wood." At this his mother said "If you are my son, you will go and hide yourself so carefully that even the birds cannot see you, and then in your hiding place you can stay and see who does this thing." The next morning he returned and found the snares again full of penises; he threw them away, and reset the snares and then hid himself so well that even the birds could not see him. After a time a beautiful girl dressed in *kaji lasong* (nettle cloth) arrived and started to make wooden penises. She was very beautiful; her name was Na Rip Nom, and her mother was Ta Im Ta Mit. Tarbong was angry when he saw her doing this and he climbed up the tree to try to stop her, and they struggled and rolled hither and thither; and then he got excited and tried to rape her, but he could not do so and so they separated and he went home and climbed on his mother's lap and said to her "Mother, I have come home without any birds." "What did you see, my son?" "I found Naripnom making penises of wood, and I tried to copulate with her, but I could not. So I return empty-handed. She is very beautiful." Then Itpomu said "If you want to possess that girl you had better go to your elder brother Komsi*thing* who lives at Rungzing Patham."

So Tarbong went to Komsi*thing*, and when he saw his younger brother he asked him why he had come. So Tarbong told him (*recapitulation*): "This girl was putting penises in my traps, and I wanted to possess her but could not, and my mother advised me to come to you." Then Komsi-*thing* said "How can you expect to possess the girl unless you give the marriage price *nyomsa afaar* and make a sacrifice with *chi* and butter *sakyou tsok rum-faat?* Do you love this girl?" "Very much." "Then I advise you to go to your *ingʔong* in Nepal and get from him the pig of the plains Malu Mayeng and buy a copper vessel." So Tarbong went to Nepal and brought back a pig and a copper vessel. When he returned Komsi*thing* said "I advise you to go to your *ingʔong* in Bhutan to get the cloth *kamo*." So he went to Bhutan and returned with the cloth, and then he had the pig and the copper pot and the cloth. (*The story cumulates—The House that Jack Built.*) From his Tibetan *ingʔong* he got a rug Numbo. From Mayel near Konchen he got millet. From Kanyong (Sikkim) he got an ox.

Now at this time there was no fire in the world; it was only in the land between earth and heaven called Mashyok Matel where the demons dwelt, in the houses of the Deut *moong* who were smiths and were called Tangshyo Tangong Karvo. Now when Komsi*thing* told Tarbong to go there to fetch fire to cook the millet he was frightened and said he would not go among the devils for then they would eat him. So Komsi*thing* called on all human beings and animals and birds and insects to volunteer to go and fetch the fire, promising rewards of gold and jewels and rich cloths. When this offer was made the bird Kahryok Fo smiled and said "I will go for a reward." And the bird flew there and found the smith's house empty as all the people were out working elsewhere, so it took a brand in its beak from the fireplace and flew back. On its way back it came to the Kashou tree (chestnut); there it felt hungry, and laid the brand on a branch while it looked for fruit. But the wind blew and the flames sprang up and a great fire raged over the world, and the bird was caught

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in it; that is the reason why till this day it has short feathers and a black face. It was ashamed and did not return to Komsi*thing*.

Komsi*thing* waited for the bird but it did not come and he saw the fire, so he asked for another volunteer; and this time an insect (? *wasp or firefly—like a grasshopper, but flies*) *taknyom nomyor nyom* volunteered to go for a reward. When it got to the smith's house all the Deut *moong* were away, so it lay on its back by the fireplace and looked at the house upside down; and the whole house turned upside down. When the Deut *moong* returned from the west it found its house upside down and searched and found the insect who had done it lying on its back; he tried to catch it, but it wriggled and flew away. The Deut *moong* said "Why have you upset my house in this way? I shall kill you for it." The insect said "If you do kill me, your house will never get straight again." "Please don't do that. What have you come for?" "Komsi*thing* has sent me to fetch fire." "I will give you some, if you promise to straighten my house; but you cannot carry fire in your mouth." "Yes, I can." They argued, and finally the insect took a brand in its mouth, and the Deut *moong* put a flint and tinder up its backside. On his return the insect rested by the Mong Ing Pong tree, and put down the brand at the foot of the tree; but the wind came and blew it to a blaze and the insect got therefrom a black face. But it flew back to Komsi*thing* and gave him the flint and tinder from his backside, since he had lost the brand; and he told him all that the Deut *moong* had told him, and showed him how to make a fire with dry grass. So they made a fire and cooked the millet in the copper vessel, but, when the millet was cooked they found they had no yeast.

The only person who possessed yeast was an old woman who lived in the plains called Numli-*nyou*; so Komsi*thing* asked who would volunteer to go and fetch it, promising great rewards. The insect *takder thing* said it would go and it went to live with the old woman for some days and helped her. One day she started to prepare *chi*, and cooked the millet; but when it came to the moment of putting in the yeast she covered *takder* with a close woven basket *tangar*. But when *takder* was inside he cried "Grandmother, in this basket I can see everything which is going on in the world; if you want to hide something from me you should cover me with a *tangjang* (this is a loose woven basket)." The old woman believed what he said and covered him with a *tangjang* and so he could see all that she was doing, though he pretended he could not. He saw her take a pot from the back of her neck, and pour something from it into her hands. Then she rubbed her hands together and scattered the dust over the cooked millet; she replaced the pot; and put the millet in the basket. Then *takder* cried "Grandmother, please take me out of this basket; I am suffocating." So Numli-*nyou* removed the basket.

After two days the lovely smell of ferment rose from the millet, and then the old woman put it in an earthen pot and covered the pot well up, and stood it over the fire. *Takder* tried to get the pot with yeast in it, but he could not; at last he hit on a plan. He told Numli-*nyou* he could see a louse in her hair and asked her to let him remove it: she agreed so he jumped on her shoulders and started delousing her. While this operation was going on Numli-*nyou* became sleepy; and then *takder* removed the pot very very slowly and very very quietly and ran away. When he was half-way away she woke up and missed *takder*. Then she discovered the theft and saw him running away and shouted after him

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"I thought you were my grandson, but I see you are nothing but a thief; you have stolen my yeast and will give it to everybody all over the world. So I set my curse on it; may it make everybody who drinks it drunk and quarrelsome." And so it has been; when people get drunk they quarrel.

When *takder* returned to Komsi*thing* with the yeast, Komsi*thing* asked him if he knew how to make *chi*: *takder* said he did (*complete recapitulation*) and they followed his instructions; but since they had no earthenware pots to put the fermented *chi* in they put it in baskets, well covered with leaves. Then Komsi*thing* asked *Taknyom* what reward he desired for bringing the fire: *Taknyom* replied "Gold and jewels and clothes are no use to an animal; what I want is to be given the plants *mangder* and *sanghi* which grow in the valley." (*He was given these.*) Similarly *Takder* (*complete recapitulation*) was granted the leavings at the bottom of the spoons and plates and patyoot.

When the *chi* was ready all were afraid to be the first to drink. Eventually the snake Putsong *beu* was summoned and drank it; when it had drunk it dashed away like lightning. Seeing this all the gods and men were frightened to drink. After that the snake Pamol *beu* was summoned; but when it had drunk it ran about biting people and animals so that they all died. (When Sangé *rum* saw that the snake would kill everybody if it was allowed to behave so he set a lock on its mouth; and nowadays it bites very few people.) Next the snake Poblyok *beu* was summoned: when it had drunk it fell senseless. Komsi*thing* gave that snake the ferns to live in; it is harmless. After this they thought that the *chi* was harmless; but then they found they had no butter for *Sakyou faat*. So Komsi*thing* went to Itpomu and asked for butter so that they could *Sakyou faat* for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripmu. He said to his mother "We have the *chi*, but no butter." Itpomu said "Get a bamboo *yongtong*," and when he had got it she filled it with the butter which she had from her cows. Then on her instructions nine containers (*takner*) of *chi* were prepared, and their edges were smeared with butter.

Now all the gods and men gathered for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripnom. Everything was prepared in due order; all the gifts were placed on one side, and then Komsi*thing rum faat* with *chi* and *sakyou*. This is the reason why today when a marriage is celebrated all the gods are worshipped, and these gifts are given. Only when Tarbong and Naripmu were husband and wife was he able to possess her. This is the reason why to-day Lepchas still give the same gifts; this is BRI-IT, the origin of marriage.

133 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron 491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with 768 votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter 823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

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CHAPTER 4

Origin of the Lepchas and Village Administration

●773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

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773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

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614 The Lepcha tribe is composed of a number of clans, called
619 *pu-tso*. No one can say how many clans there are, for this grouping seems to be a purely local one. In the Kalimpong district I recorded the names of over forty different clans, but in Lingtem there were but fourteen, all of them different from those I had already collected. There does not appear ever to have been any sort of tribal organisation, nor even a tribal leader; and while I use the word clan to denote these collections of people, it would be better to regard them as merely belonging to one large family, which is in fact what
614 they are. We shall probably never know what functions the clan formerly possessed, but its sole use nowadays is in regulating marriage, it being impossible for a man to marry a girl of the same *pu-tso* as his own. Ethnologists call this custom exogamy: but Lepcha exogamy is of a special kind, for it does permit a man to marry a relative of his father provided the relationship is removed by five (but some say seven) generations. Such a marriage is of course only possible with a person descended through the father's sister, since she, having married into another clan, belongs to a different *pu-tso*. In the case of a marriage between the descendants of two sisters a separation of only three generations is demanded. In actual practice all this means is that any two related people, provided they do not both belong to the same clan, may marry provided the relationship between them is sufficiently distant as to have been forgotten for all practical purposes.

Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

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Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

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amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded, except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner. It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

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It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

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came to a place called Sakyong Pantong, where the Mayel people disappeared into the forest. By diligent searching, however, the Lepchas discovered their tracks. They followed the signs as far as Lungzong Chachyo(?) and then completely lost them, after which they returned and settled in Jonga.

They used to wear clothes made from nettles and hats of plaited cane, like those once worn by the Lepchas. They cultivated rice; also pumpkins, chillies, maize, and manioc, which they used to take and sell in the market at Zikchu Thum, a place in Tibet, and somewhere between Chumbi and Lhasa. They did not wish to be recognised; and it was for this reason that they went so far to dispose of their products. But during this time the Maharaja had been forced to remove his court to Chumbi (see Chapter 3) and his servants were in the habit of going to Zikchu on market days. Being for the most part Lepchas they, of course, recognised the Mayel people. They told the Maharaja what they had seen; but since the court shortly returned to Sikkim there was no opportunity to see them again; but it is believed they no longer leave Mayel.

Myths of this sort are, of course, constantly being re-interpreted; and of this particular one there are endless variations. Here is the version given by Jiroong:

"It is three days' journey from Lingtem to Mayel, which was once visited by my great-grandfather. He was out hunting at the time and came to a place where there were many big trees and a stream. He noticed a piece of wood floating on the water. It was moving slowly along and he decided to follow it. He came eventually to a narrow path, so narrow as to be like a knife-blade, where he saw some feathers lying on the ground. They belonged to a Mayel bird, which is the mother of all migratory birds that come to Jongu. He followed this path for three more days and came eventually to a village, where there were seven big and well-built houses. This was the village of Mayel; but at the time he did not know it. He went to the first house and asked for

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shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalimpong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

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224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con- [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall- [757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth, [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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852 [554] 562 [824] the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time. He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 562 773 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 [787] 553 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are 551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji*—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptak klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by
the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is
completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's
menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease
during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even
though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or
said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of
special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of
menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773 ●
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the
place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he
could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the
middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look
very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned
some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts
and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a
time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very
pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to
move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not
satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they
now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath
the women's clothing he decided that it would be more
convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a
result of this arrangement the women started to bleed
periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a
blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was
carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."
773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

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581 539 ●773 then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyomfar*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

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539 581 773 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

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it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

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581 539 ●773 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour something out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was, she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi;* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

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cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to live on such things up to the present day.

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

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1. The first and main propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim was Lama *Lha btsun nam mkha 'jigs med* (shortly called *Lha btsun chhen po*) who belonged to the Tibetan *rDzogs chhen pa* Sect. He was later joined by a number of other learned priests, among whom the *rNying ma pa* Lama *Kha thog kun tu bzang po* and Lama *mNga bdag sems pa phun tshogs rig hdzin* were the two most outstanding personalities. It seems that the work of spreading Buddhism in Sikkim was begun in 1642, in which year also the coronation of the first Maharaja of Sikkim, *Phun tshogs rnam rgyal* is said to have taken place. After *Lha btsun chhen po's* death his first reincarnation, called *Mi bskyod dga ba*, was found at *hBum thang in Bhutan*.

2. The influx of Tibetan settlers began with the advent of *Gyad hbum bsags* the ancestor of the present ruling family of the Sikkim State, who reached this area via the Chumbi Valley (Tb. *Gro mo*) towards the end of the 16th century. *Gyad hbum bsags* was accompanied by a number of Tibetan retainers, who settled in Sikkim—which they called *hBras ljongs* the "Rice Country"—and who became kown as "Bhutias". They were the ancestors of the eight clans, into which the local Tibetan population became later divided. In the following centuries, also other groups of settlers arrived in Sikkim, partly from the Bhutanese districts of Ha and Pharo, and some even from Assam. In connection with the account of the first encounter between the Tibetans and the aboriginal inhabitants, the Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim mention an interesting episode: "as the (Tibetan) party happened to be riding on ponies, and some of the retainers had matchlock guns, which they went on firing along the road, the simple natives who had never seen ponies nor firearms, said to others, that the entire party rode on huge hogs, and some of them bore sticks, which produced great sounds."

3. The Limbus, who call themselves Yakthumba, are mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim, together with the Mangar tribe, under the collective name *Tshong*; the name 'Limbu' under which they are mostly known, is of Nepali origin. According to a doubtful oral tradition, they are supposed to have migrated into Sikkim from the neighbouring Tibetan province of *Tshang*. The Limbus, who were divided into ten clans, were living peacefully side by side with the Lepchas, who regarded them as distant relatives and even claimed, that the Lepcha and Limbu gods were related to each other.—The Chronicles mention, that Limbus sometimes occupied important positions in the administration of the Sikkim State, and a Limbu lady became one of the wives of the second Maharaja. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the rule of the fourth Maharaja, the majority of the Limbus left Sikkim in consequence of the heavy labour, which was being imposed on them, especially at times of the frequent raids of the neighbouring Nepalese and Bhutanese.

4. All Lepcha words, the orthography of which it was possible to ascertain, are printed in italics according to a simplified romanization, similar to the system of transcription adopted in the Dictionary of the Lepcha Languages, by G. B. Mainwaring and A. Gruenwedel, Berlin 1898. Also all Tibetan words are rendered in an orthographic romanization.

5. About the Bardo and the beliefs connected with it see Evans-Wentz, W.Y: The Tibetan Book of the Dead, London 1927, and Tucci, G.: Il libro tibetano dei morti, Milano 1949.

6. To all those among the Lepchas who supplied me with valuable informations concerning the subject here dealt with, especially to Mrs. D. Mohan of Kalimpong, Mr. K. P. Tamsang, the Mandal of Bong Basti and to one of the oldest living Lepchas, the 105 years old "Manibu Badschi" of Nyim, my sincere thanks are due; I would also like to acknowledge gratefully the valuable assistance, rendered to me by Miss Ray Williams of Kalimpong and Father J. M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission at Gik.

7. I was unable to obtain a confirmation of the statement made by Kali Kumar Das in his The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell, JBTS, Vol. VI, Pt. 1, Calcutta 1896, p. 4, that the Lepchas believe in the presence of eight different souls in the human body.

8. They are supposed to have been created from the ice of the Kanchenjunga glaciers by the foremost god of the Lepchas *Ta she thing* (or *Tuk bo thing* ?).—It is today, with traditions quickly vanishing, rather difficult to establish the name of this God Creator. Due to the adoption of the name *Ta she* for Padmasambhava (Tb. *Padma hbyung gnas*) the main and widely venerated saint of the Unreformed Buddhist School of Tibet and the resulting

[i.e., human souls, see cat. 116, p. 27. —Analyst]

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confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tak bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal kgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa bo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa bo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bo* and *Ya mo*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names, under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

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13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362.

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-puteo-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namtseemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc.

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil[1]. While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories.

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *No song ngo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad kbum bongs*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad kbum bongs* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896.

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tam Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *ha'Tsa berung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains,

[1 i.e., during the funeral rites.—Analyst]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

●773 in whose neighbourhood they had settled, two or three clans often worshipping the same mountain. It became customary, that each clan had to perform an annual sacrifice to the spirit of its particular mountain. In regard to marriage, there is no obstacle—unless
582 a blood relationship exists or that people belong actually to the same clan—that members of two clans, which venerate the same peak, should not intermarry. In case that bride and bridegroom belong to clans, which worship two different mountains, the wife will have to sacrifice after the marriage to the sacred peak of her husbands clan.

18. They are made from a certain kind of reed; on the top of the stick cuts are made in
791 such a way, that these parts open in the form of a flower. These sticks are regarded as the symbol of the magical power, over which the sorcerer commands.[1]

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 36. -Analyst]

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

Anthropos. Volume 48 (1953)

/889/ The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower

By René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

Contents:

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114 Part of the legendary material of the peoples living in the maharajah state of Sikkim at the foot of the Central Himalayas has already been treated by various people, and also a number of traditions of the Lepchas—the largest group of the original inhabitants of this territory—have been mentioned in numerous publications. (1)

1. Cf. Kali Kumar Das, "The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell," Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) Volume VI (1896). —C. de Beauvoir-Stocks, "Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikhim," Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21 (1925). — G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London, 1938). — J. Morris, Living with Lepchas (London, 1938).

114 T13 Singularly enough, however, one of the legends best known among the Lepchas has not received—with the exception of two brief references—closer treatment in any of the pertinent works that have appeared to date: this is a tradition that tells of the unsuccessful project of the Lepcha people to construct a tower of clay pots reaching the vault of heaven.

172 114 One of the reasons for the survival of this legend is the circumstance that at the supposed site of the tower potsherds have been dug

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the
172 fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

•773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

/Lepcha text follows./ (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

•773 539 filled with young Lepchas. At that time they decided to do the following: "We will build a tower in order to climb up to the sky and to pull it down with a hook"; this they had decided. Then they made the decision to pile small clay pots one upon the other [and in this way to build a tower]. The place they chose was the plain of Ta-lom. Here, in order to carry out the work, they divided all the people into three groups: first, a group who formed the pots from crushed earth; second, [a group] of bearers; and third, those who placed the pots in layers; thus they were divided.

Now they heaped the vessels one upon the other and, placing them in layers, they almost reached the sky; at this time they already saw the sky very near; those who were working on top—when they caught sight of the sky so close at hand—thought: "If we had a forked stick, then we could pull down the sky." Then they called down to those who were below: "Hand us a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those down below understood: "Tear down, knock down!" Those working at the top of the tower then called again: "Hand up a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those below once again understood: "Tear down!" Now those working below cried: "Shall we tear it down?" Then those above cried out in anger: "Yes, tear down! Tear down!"

So those who were down below now got hammers, axes, and clubs and began to shatter the vessels at the base. When they had already made good progress in their work, the tower suddenly came tumbling down, crushing everything. Those who had climbed up to the top as well as those who had worked close to the foot of the tower were all killed by the clay pots falling upon them. Those who survived could, however, no longer communicate with each other.

But to construct a tower like this, no one was capable formerly except the Lepchas; and the experienced men who could teach such work, these were Lepchas. Up until that time they had all spoken the same language, but now, since they could no longer understand one another, they parted ways. Some of them went up [to the north], some down [to the south], others to the east and some to the west. As a result of this separation they settled the entire world, and thus there arose the numerous peoples and tribes existing today. —The place to which [the Lepchas] descended from the glacier mountain after their creation, lies in present-day Sikkim, and it is a plain upon which a great rice field is now located.

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which
614 makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

114 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong
614 are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly publications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came
539 into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

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this tribe is situated in Sikkim, close to the confluence of the Raman and the Lingkhim Khola, within the realm of the Daramdin Estate. The ancestors of the Na ong, created inside the earth, emerged here from a gigantic hollowed boulder, which one could still see on the bank of the Raman a generation ago. (6)

6. During the heavy rains of the year 1899 this boulder was dragged deeper into the river bed where it is finally supposed to have sunk in the sand.

After their arrival on the surface of the earth the Na ong settled down at the place called Phugamdin, which today lies in the north-eastern part of the great rice field belonging to the Daramdin estate. /893/ — One day they became aware of the vault of heaven spreading above their heads, and since they thought that it was very low, they decided to build a tower of pots in order to reach the sky.— Since all the members of the tribe declared themselves in agreement with this plan, they immediately began to carry it out. The foundation of the tower was erected on the level surface of the present day Daramdin Field. The work progressed rapidly, and the building finally became so high that only two or three pots were still needed in order to complete the work. Because of this, the men working at the top of the tower became very excited. They called down to the helpers working below to hand up the required number of pots quickly. Now the command was passed down from man to man through the long chain of helpers, and when it finally reached the workers at the foot of the tower, its sense was already completely distorted; for now they understood it to mean that the tower was no longer necessary and should be torn down because the men standing at the top had already reached the sky. The men, women and children on the ground therefore proceeded to smash the lowest pots and as a result the entire construction collapsed with a terrible roar, burying beneath it all the members of the tribe. During its fall the tower broke into three great pieces, one of which fell on the mountain called Kaijalia within the limits of the present day Karmi estate, while a second portion of the tower plunged onto the Maney Hill in the precincts of the Relling estate, and the third piece finally came down near the village of Phedap, in the Nepalese district of Ilam. By the impact the above-mentioned mountains were pressed in to such an extent that today they show a clear saddle form.

●113 539 Only a single man escaped from the disaster alive. Frightened by what had happened and fearing the wrath of the divinity, which in his opinion had brought about the annihilation of the members of his tribe, he determined to leave the place of misfortune and to seek an abode in Nepalese territory.

Therefore he went to the village of Phedap, where he married one of the girls of this place. In the course of time once again a tribe was formed from his numerous descendants. It likewise was designated as Na ong. But this generation of the Na ong also didn't prove to be much smarter than its ancestors.

[118] One day the Na ong decided to kill the fish in the sacred river Mai-khola, which flows near the village of Phedap. This river was regarded as the seat of a mighty divinity, to whom at one time thousands of animals were sacrificed once a year by the local Nepalese population. The blood of these animals colored the stream red for days.

The Na ong thought now that the local millet beer, called marwa, was probably the best poison to kill the fish; since it could make a strong man drunk, it was surely well-suited to destroy all the fish living in this river. Therefore they poured /894/ huge quantities of millet beer into the stream, but the divinity of the river, enraged by this sacrilege, killed the entire tribe on the spot. Only a boy and an old woman escaped annihilation.

The woman took care of the boy, and when he had finally grown to manhood, he married, (7) and his descendants again lived in the

7. Tradition does not tell to what tribe his wife belonged.

village Phedap. But the tribe never again flourished — a fact ascribed to the displeasure of the river god who, despite all the sacrifices offered to it by subsequent generations of the Na ong, would not be pacified. When finally only a few Na ong were alive, about sixty years ago, one of them named Kaipal decided to leave the settlement on the banks of the Mai-khola and move with his family near the place where his ancestors had once built the tower; for here — so he thought — the remainder of the tribe would escape the wrath of the river god and, under the protection of the ancestral spirits, would again increase in number. His son Karandal, the transmitter of this legend, later married a Limbu girl from the Malboma sib in the new

●113 dwelling place; this marriage produced four sons and three daughters,
539 who, however, were apparently absorbed in the families of the neighboring Limbu. Thus the tribe of Na ong was finally completely extinguished.

113 The place where, according to the legend, the construction of the tower was undertaken is a plateau about two kilometers square situated in the western part of Sikkim, near the Indian-Nepalese border. To the west it is screened by a chain of mountains; to the south and the northeast it is bounded by two rivers. In the deeply fissured landscape of the Himalayan foothills a level plain of such proportions is a great rarity, and hence the plateau is clearly visible from a distance. It was subsequently transformed almost completely into a rice field, and only its extreme eastern corner, which bears the name Phugamdin and where — according to the legend — the first settlement of the Na ong arose, is uncultivated and today serves as a burial place for the Limbus, who recently settled in this part of Sikkim. (8)

8. A scholarly work on the burial methods of the Limbus — as well as an exhaustive investigation of this tribe — has unfortunately not yet been written. According to reports available up to now, the Limbu dead are generally buried, but sometimes cremated. Without doubt, however, the potsherds discovered in Daramdin cannot be grave-goods of the Limbus, for the Lepchas, who are sufficiently aware of the customs of this neighboring tribe — would in this case have ascribed no special significance to such findings.

172 While people are farming on the plateau — especially during the spring plowing — potsherds are constantly discovered; understandably enough, these findings are connected by the local inhabitants to the legend of the tower. Despite repeated questioning I still have not yet succeeded in obtaining some of the findings for closer examination; apparently the unearthed fragments are heedlessly thrown away by the populace.

/895/ The conditions which prevail at present in the Tibetan-Indian border region make it impossible, for the time being, to undertake any extensive investigation on the spot, and particularly any systematic excavations. I must therefore limit myself here to the observation that, according to the statement of the local inhabitants,

172 the fragments reveal a clearly convex shape and seem to come from uncommonly strong pots made of baked clay. Until now I have been unable to determine whether other objects such as bones, tools, weapons, etc. are occasionally also found along with the fragments.

3. Explanations

●173 In conclusion, after a short summary, I should like to attempt a
172 few explanations of what has been said above. —The stories that occur among many peoples of the world dealing with the Flood and the building of a tower reaching to the sky also belong to the oldest and most strongly rooted traditions of the Lepchas. The current version of the legend of the tower building places the site on the plateau of Laramdin. As a proof, so to speak, of the correctness of this tradition, it is cited that right up to the present day the fragments of the pots from which the tower supposedly was built can be found here. Yet it seems questionable to me whether the doubtlessly very old tower legend was always brought into connection with the discoveries made in Daramdin. I suspect rather that the first potsherd discoveries were made in the course of the more intensive farming carried out in this region during the last hundred years; these soon brought about a corresponding variation of the legend. Supporting this assumption is a remark contained in G. B. Mainwaring's A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), one of the oldest publications about the Lepchas. The relevant passage, found on page XX of the Introduction, states: "On the top of the lofty Sung li hlo, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas (Na ong), now extinct, endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rocks and blocks of stones as the ruins are shown on the place."

As is evident, in this version of the legend, written down more than seven decades ago, neither the plateau of Daramdin nor the use of clay pots is mentioned, and the place of the action is moved to the mountain Sung li hlo in the vicinity of Darjeeling.

172 It will be possible to give an absolutely sound explanation of the type and date of the discovered vessel fragments only after an intensive investigation of a large number of the findings. Possibly the potsherds stem from an early settlement that later was lost to oblivion. —The protected plateau would have offered a very favorable spot for such a settlement. Likewise it would not be out of the question that these settlers were Lepcha sibs or a people closely related to them, who used clay vessels as household objects.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into
Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many important particulars. They, or at least some of their tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

178 oldest homeland bears the name Damsang. We have here an inkling of the Tibetan Lama influence, which, as in Hindu tradition, links the original homeland with the holy district. Since the King-tzum-song-bu is very closely linked with the myths of the Lepchas we shall go more deeply into a study of it.

(a) Myths of the Creation of the World

● 773 776 The myths of the creation are of special importance. "Create" in the Lepcha language is called "ayit" or "it" in its abbreviated form. Another word for create is "de-bo." "It-rum" or "de-rum" means "god of creation"; "Rum" by itself means "god." "Pum-thing-rum" signifies the same. "Pum bo" means "Principal," "Chief," "God." The name "It-bo" or "It-bo-mu" is again taken from the creative action of god. Other names are, "Ta-she-thing," "Sa-dzug-rum." The latter are connected with the sun god and are used by some as the emblem of the Supreme God.

The following is the myth about creation: In ancient times Rum created a great expanse of water. Nothing else existed at the time. Then he created on the bed of the water the fish "ngo." Next he formed three pairs of deities who lay down crosswise on the fish. The first of the pairs were Rug-lu and Rug-lom, and after them were Mon-li and Rönggul, Pō-ril and Pō-dong. These are three pairs of male and female deities. Over these were fashioned Sōm-li and Sōm-nag-mōn-mu, a couple who as man and wife are supposed to belong to the human race. They all carried the earth which rested on them in the form of a dish. The slightest movement of the fish resulted in earthquakes. Rum then created the great mountains of the earth, the chief of which is King-tzum-song-bu; then four more peaks, Pōn-dām, Pōn-tzum-dju, Pōn-tzum-tang-rem-dju, Don-dong-tang-nyik-dju. Another story records that two chief mountains were created, *viz.*, the Kang-chen and the Kang-lo. Another Mun makes a contrary statement, "The snow-capped mountain Kang-chen-rum was created first and as a companion to it, Nyo-ling-rum, the goddess of the great ocean was created." In some versions of this story the goddess is named Lyang-ser-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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dong-bong, who is a mountain goddess in the plain. There exist many other variations about the sequence of creation.

Then Rum made the two rivers, Rong-nyo and Rong-nyit, to flow down from the mountains. They are male and female. In the middle of the female Rong-nyo, he created the rock, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, similar to the navel in the human body. A high mountain, regarded as the navel of the world is a well-known conception in Asia. The goddess, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, is supposed to live on this rock and childless parents pray to her to be blessed with children. The idea of male gods having their abode on the snow-capped mountains and the goddesses in the lakes, is fairly common among the Lepcha. These gods and goddesses are often linked with the first parents in Lepcha mythology.[25]

The sacrificial prayers of the Mun and the Bong thing are often preceded by a legend of creation. The text which we shall later render in detail begins thus :

"Fa dong dju fa dong dō gom shi gom yu rum !
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dō (personal male and female deities) and Gom shi, Gom yu rum (hunting gods).
Lyang it ung it lyang sog dōm it
The earth was created, the water was created and the whole world was created.
Chi log so log it
Millet beer and husked rice were created
Lyang tōg bu ta she it ga.
Lyang wife, and Tōg bu ta she's son (man) were created"[26]

Another part reads as follows :

"Ayan na ba lyang ung ma it ma den na ba.
In very ancient times when land and water were not yet created."

An old report has the words :

"Ta she nun rum ayit .....Ta she created the good spirits
Num shim nyo ayit .....He created man.
Lyang ayit .....He created the earth.
Ung ayit .....He created water
Gun pang ayit .....He created all things."[27]

25. Report of Gu-gu Bong thing at Git biyong.
26. Text of Gu-gu Bong thing.
27. Dictionary of the Lepcha language, op. cit., p. 121 b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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[773] Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living [774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the [775] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence. [776] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological [777] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 125/127. N. 4. p. 368.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 336, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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(b) Myths of the Creation of Man

There are several myths current about the creation of man. Pum-thing created the first human beings. The first man was called Ti-gung-thik and his wife was called Ni-gung-ngal. They lived in Mayal-lyang, which lies on the other side of King-tzum-song-bu. There was then no disease, no suffering, no death. Now all human beings return to this place after their death.

In days of yore it was possible to reach this land from the earth. A hunter once came into the district of Mayal. When night overtook him, he prepared to put up for the night. Then he became aware of lights gleaming a little distance away. He approached the place, contacted the people and asked for shelter. They said to him, "What are you doing over here in Ren-dyong?"[34] He replied, "I hunt animals so I can provide myself with food." "Have you then nothing else to eat? Have you no grain to sustain yourself?" "No, I have none," replied the hunter. So they gave him gherkins, rice and millet and gave him instructions about the cultivation of these seeds after the re-migration of the birds after winter. Later on another hunter travelled to the spot and was stranded. He lit a fire and began to prepare his food. The inhabitants came there and were desirous of looking on at the proceedings. The hunter, however, looked upon them as intruders. He grew furious and struck them with a view of driving them away. They said to him, "In our land no one strikes another. We all live in peace and harmony. Take up your belongings and leave the place as quickly as you can, or our dogs will pounce upon you." The hunter looked around and perceived dogs that resembled bears and tigers. He grew terrified and fled away as fast as he could. Great storms followed in his wake; there were landslides and earthquakes; mountains came crashing down and all the entrances to the land were completely sealed over. Ever since this incident Mayal has remained inaccessible.[35]

Gorer gives the following description of Mayal, "The people of Mayal consists of seven brothers each with their own name

34. Dwelling place of the ancestors and now pronounced "den-dyong."
35. Report from Kalimpong.

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as if it were human seed from a husband and the women are fertilised and fruitful. 775 [776 777]

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a-ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37] 773

The Dān-si Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kafār-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-she-thing and Tōg-bu-thing then came into being. But 773 776

36. op. cit. p. 235 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ong near Maria-Basti.

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● 773 [776] the real god of creation is It-bo. He has a wife by name of De-bo. (It-bo and De-bo mean "to produce" and "to create.") It-bo first created a man Ti-gung-thik. He then took a bone from the body of this man and out of it he created a wife for him. The place where the first human beings lived was called Da-lon-par-tan. (This is also the plain in which the tower intended to reach heaven was constructed.) The first couple lived there in perfect happiness and contentment until they became sinful. When they fell into sin the god Rum punished them by sending great floods which continued unabated for fifteen days so that all the people were drowned. Only one Lepcha couple were able to save themselves in a wooden ship.

Stocks narrates the following myth of creation : "In the beginning there was only sea, and the creator Tashey-takbo- [772] thing made two kinds of fish,—ngo, was the common kind, while the ngo-yang had a serpent form. From the sea we believe that a tortoise supports the world, and on it Tashey-takbo-thing created birds and animals.

Then he tried to make a form of man from butter, but it would not stand up, as whenever he made it, it melted. (Had the butter only remained firm [illegible]e should all have been very beautiful). Then he made a human form of earth and mud, and wind came into this resemblance of man and life was created. Then Tashey-takbo-thing made blood out of the water which he put in it and the bones he created from stone. Then he moved away to see whether the creature he had made could answer him and speak, but as he had no nerves or veins he was unable to do so. So Tashey-takbo-thing picked a great many creepers from the jungle and from those which he spread all over the form, it spoke.

Thus was the first male created, but as there was no female he was lonely, and could not reproduce himself. One day as he was catching birds with his snare in the jungle, Tashey-takbo-thing entangled a woman in one for him to catch. So the man caught her and brought her to his home ; but at first they could not marry as there was no go between to help them to talk over the matter. But at last the Rum decided to send the owl (tam-bum) down the country of creation,

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It-lyang."[38] This myth is interesting because it relates, in the first place, the two efforts made by God to create man, and secondly because it relates how God brought the woman into the life of the man, by placing her in some mysterious way in the snare set by man to catch birds. 773 ●

According to another myth the genealogy of mankind is even more complicated. Among the various creatures that were created as It-mo's children, there is also Takbo-thing, who hitherto had been designated as the god of creation. Ta-she is added to the name with whom we shall become more closely acquainted later on. "The last two to be born were Takbo-thing and Nazong-ngyu, and although these were brother and sister, they became husband and wife and had many children."[39] These children however were evil spirits and demons. They were not nourished by their mother, but were disowned and driven away. They live not on the earth but outside the earth. The reason why monsters were born out of this wedlock was surely due to the forbidden and irregular marriage between brother and sister. Rum then separated them. After the separation a human being was born. The mother loved this child deeply and fed it at her breast. When the other children perceived this they grew very jealous, hated the child intensely and so it died. The grief-stricken mother sent two birds up to Tak-bo-thing in order to fetch from him the Water of Life and the Water of Death. Tak-bo-thing gave them both the waters and instructed them about the use of the waters. On their return flight the birds decided not to use the directions as they had been given to them but to reverse them. And so it happens that men die and are always born again. Rum stands as a symbol to man. The Mung demons, on the contrary, do not die, and a priest-magician, Bong-thing, was sent to keep them under control. Only then was it possible for man to live on the earth. He is called Tar-bong-mu. As he was catching birds one day he found a fairy, the daughter of the Lha-ma-yin.[40] He forcibly took this beautiful Na-rib-nom as his wife. To avoid the misfortune consequent [585]

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38. op. cit. p. 355 sq.
39. op. cit. p. 346.
40. Tibetan name for Titans.

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to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 354.

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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nazong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-kŏb, and the daughter, Bi-kŏb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-kŏb and Bi-kŏb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni-gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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776 [773] consequence they had to labour in order to procure their livelihood. These first human beings are the parents of the Rong (Lepcha), the Brug-pa (Bhutanese) and the Jimdar (Nepalese). The very first man, the progenitor of the race, is Ti-gung-pum." So far the statement of Sa-liang. And so we have different traditions that tell the story of the first human beings. Often entire genealogies of gods and spirits are quoted.[43] Finally, the immediate ancestors of mankind make their appearance. The presence of evil in the world is sometimes attributed to them, for, being brother and sister, they live as man and wife, without the proper performance of the marriage ceremonies. Other myths offer other solutions for the problem of evil in the world.

(*c*) MYTHS OF THE DELUGE

773 "In the beginning all men were good. Gradually they grew perverse. This annoyed Rum to such an extent that he sent a great deluge to destroy them all. Only one high mountain peak remained above the water. This was originally called Dŏng-grung, a ladder which links earth with heaven. The mountain is now called Dān-dong. In order to appease god and make the flood abate, the people sacrificed chi, millet beer, through the bird 'ko-hon,' (partridge). As the bird sprayed the chi in sacrifice to heaven some of it fell on its breast. This fact is supposed to explain why even today, the bird's breast is bitter to the taste. The sacrifice was pleasing to god and the flood abated."

We have still another version of this tradition, "Rong-nyo, the female river, and Rong-nyit, the male, were deliberating with each other as to how they could meet and unite on the plain at the outskirts of the jungle. In the Lepcha language this place is called Pa-sog. Rong-nyo chose as her guide through the mountains a snake which glided straight to their destination. Rong-nyit chose the partridge as his guide. The bird flew hither and thither and took a confusing route across the mountain, thus causing Rong-nyit to arrive late at the rendezvous. He was very angry when he discovered that Rong-nyo had already arrived. Furiously he shouted, 'I

43. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. 345 sq.

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am going back!' As he flowed backward the waters rose higher and higher and soon covered the mountains. All mankind was drowned. Only one couple were able to save themselves on the high peak, Dān-dong. When this happened Rong-nyo said to the priest, 'Offer a sacrifice to Rong-nyit. Appease him so that he may turn back and the floods subside.' The priest did as he was told, and when the sacrifice had been offered the floods abated. Then Rong-nyo said, 'I am a woman. I shall, therefore, be obedient and live at a lower level than man, who shall henceforth flow over me.' And so when the two rivers did eventually meet, Rong-nyit streamed over Rong-nyo, who flows beneath it."[44]

This myth makes it abundantly clear that the quarrel between the man and the woman was the real cause of the flood. Instead of the bird acting as the intermediary, the priest performs the conciliatory sacrifice. Another version of this myth identifies the partridge with the woman, "In the beginning Fooroong and Nazong-nyo lived, our first grandfather and mother, the ancestors on the earth. The flood came on and nearly every human creature perished, only two who ran to the summit of Mount Tendong-lho were saved. Now Takbo-thing was the father of Tasheything, who had married the partridge (ko-hon-fo) and she put some chi in a large leaf (tung-fyum-nyom) which she offered to her father-in-law saying that if he only would, he could stop the flood. And Takbo-thing looking down from the country of the Rum, saw that the world was flooded, and that his daughter-in-law was praying to him, and offering him 'chi.' He took up his walking stick (pa tung) and struck the world so that the water sank in. But the partridge split some of the 'chi' on her breast. (The mark can be seen to this day, and because of this the partridge is called tung-fyum). So the world became dry once more, and the trees and the bushes commenced to grow once again and the world was re-peopled."[45] In this myth the relationship between Tasheything and Takbo-thing is again altered. This is another instance of the manifold variations prevalent among Lepcha legends.

44. Kalimpong tradition.
45. Stocks, op. cit. p. 389; cfr. the genealogy of God and his family p. 60.

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T73 [T76] In another legend the serpent king is connected with the flood: "....And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female and it is from these two that the human beings have spread over the entire world..... When these two were made, birth so multiplied that there was not enough room in the world. Then Parli-bu, who was the serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky. Everyone fled to the top of Kong-chen-chu, the highest peak in the Himalayas, but only two people were saved. The place where they stood is called Mayal-kyong to this day. While the flood was raging, Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world named Yongli-pono, to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent to pieces thus making the waters run down into the plains and we, the Rong folk, still believe that the Blue Mountains (that can be seen from the valley of Rangpo-chu) are the remains of the cut body of the serpent. When the world was dry once again, Tashey-thing sent down two rivers from the Himalaya mountains guided by another serpent called king Paril-patong and a quail, the Ko-hun-fo, and these were Rung-nyo (Tista) and Rung-nyit.

He also sent Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu down into the world from the height of Mayal-kyong, giving them the name Tikung-tek and Nikong-gnal. These are the first 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' of the Rong folk. As they had no king, Tashey-thing sent down Gyabo-chaya-dor-tulku from Mayal-kyong and he is the 'grandfather' (ancestor) of the present Maharaja."[68] This legend links the first parents with the flood and the re-peopling of the earth. The name of the first king who is sent by the High God is quite Tibetan and points to Tibetan motifs, according to which, the first king came from heaven.

Mainwaring, the great collector of cultural treasures of the Lepchas, cites the following myth, "It may be noted that the Lepchas have legends in common with divers other primitive races,....regarding the flood and the tower of Babel. The legends were without doubt, brought with them

68. op. cit. 388 sq.

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from beyond the snows, but they have connected the incidents with their present place of residence. There is a hill visible from Darjeeling, which, as the tale hath it, when all the country was under water, arose and supported a ship containing a few persons, all other people being drowned. The hill rose up like a horn, (hence the name a-róng, a horn,) and afterwards subsided to its present form. It is known to the Europeans as the Camel's back. On the top of the lofty Sung-lilho, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas—(the na-óng) now extinct,—endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rock and blocks of stone, as the ruins, are shown on the place."[47] We ourselves heard this saga of the tower and its ruins, in Darjeeling. In Git-biyong, we heard the following version of this saga, "The Lepchas filled a great many pitchers with earth, and piled them higher and higher over each other in an effort to reach the heavens. The man on the top reached so high that with the aid of a long hook he fancied he could link earth with heaven. Whereupon he shouted to the people beneath him, 'Quick! Pass a hook on to me.' It must be noted that in the Lepcha language the word for 'hook' and for 'cut off' have an identical pronunciation. The people yelled, 'Why cut off?' From above sounded the urgent answer, 'Quick, the hook.' They understood it to be, 'Quick, cut off!' So they cut off the rope and their tower came crumbling to the ground."

Here is another version of the story, "When (after the flood) the world was full of people once more, a tribe called the Na-ong, or 'Ignorant persons' prepared to ascend to the Rum country, and they began to build a tower of earthen pots. They piled them so high that the Rum country was only one pole away. The creator thought they were becoming too eager and too zealous, and that it was not good for them.

So he thought he would create confusion, and make them all speak in different tongues, so that they would misunderstand one another. The man at the top shouted, 'Kok vim yang tale' (hand up the pole with the hook,) while the men at the bottom heard the words, 'Chek tala' (cut it

47. G. B. Mainwaring, A grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) Language, Calcutta, 1876, p. XX.

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773 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man
173 at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 The myth describing the building of the tower demons-
772 trates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 259 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 236 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 237.

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

776 The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
[773] tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples.

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly
[278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) and earth."[88]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār Basti gives us an illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

88. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner:

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyō. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[82] The world of the

82. "Fiang it dyō it
Chi's genesis, Dyō's intoxication genesis! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked on as female; dyō is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different from millet, and is looked on as a male).

lung tăn o ba nang plō — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plō
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

Sang log pair of trees originated! (Several holy trees are known. Na-ō and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sō-brio. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altar. The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

nag dōm tam ga — son sa dăn dog ga rum fig rum plō
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing sa a dyăn rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tăn
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing kob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tăn plō
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — nag it — yang ming yang song!
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

782 776 [773] demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act. Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner [688] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart. But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears, gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of good things. If we do not know how to act in the right manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God, the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god, Fat dzag yō sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures, perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[530] 62a. to pong sa lung tăn rong kŏb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
dŏm are ga bam mung ka tŏn sŏ pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gŏn ga tag gŏng sa mŏn lam ma tong dŏ do abu amu sa lung tăn plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sŏn nin kŏb song ni tŏnŏn sug lang bam sŏ lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top cho. sug ma gŏn na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la sŏm d,u chogu yu sug lang bam dŏ do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gŏn gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la sŭm kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hŏ do nŏm chio. fat dzag yŏ sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yŏ sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog dŏm ga son min nŏng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiŏ rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dŏ do nie syu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer: "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[84]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

84. *op. cit.* p. 244 sq.

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Koeng was one of the beetle rope holders, for it was the time of the year when he lives and sings for three months; the bak-dyol was another beetle who also comes out at this time, whilst the dyang-dyang (another beetle) was also alive, so he came too. So did Neprik-nyom, the grass-hopper and lots of other insects—all helped Tashey-thing who started climbing down the rope.

But almost immediately Mon-tsu-mot cut it, and all the animals and insects became so frightened that they ran away at once. Tashey-thing saved himself by holding on to the rock with one of the hairs from his moustache, and we Rong folk believe to this day that leaves from the bush we find hanging down from fry rocks, which has a grey colour like the tint of the thatching grass, and which is soft like hair, originates from the one hair that saved his life. He was wondering how he would release himself from his peril when a monkey happened to pass, who asked him what he was doing.

Tashey-thing told him he had come down to take some honey from the rock, but his wife, Mon-tsu-mot, with some animals and insects who had promised to help him, had played a nasty trick and cut the rope they had been holding.

So the monkey took him off the rock, and putting him on his back, told him he was to keep his eyes closed until he knew by the sound that he, the monkey, was walking; he was on no account to open them especially when they were rustling through the leaves.

Now when Tashey-thing was put down in a safe place, he told the monkey for a reward he would give him gold, silver or anything he asked for. But the monkey did not want gold or silver. 'Give me,' he said, 'a blessing instead, that will help me to have the first fruits of every field in harvest time.'

And Tashey-thing gave him the blessing.

But he cursed the rock bees, saying much trouble had come to him through them, and that it would be no sin for the Rong folk to take their honey away in future.

Then Tashey-thing planted a species of bamboo (the bling) and when it had grown big enough he made a bow from it, then he planted another bamboo (the pa-song) from which he made an arrow. Then for three years he followed

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the footprint of Mon-tsu-mot, and passing through nine countries and crossing nine ranges of mountains, he found the wild boar at last sleeping in a lair she had made from dry leaves. Then he aimed with his arrow and killing her, he collected firewood and commenced to burn her. Whilst he was roasting her, some hot fat fell from her body, and a drop falling on his thumb made him lick it off.

Then he cursed all wild boars, saying it would be no sin henceforth if the Rong folk were to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day, we can eat the flesh of the wild boar, which we never did formerly when she was Tashey-thing's wife. It was also then that the bow and arrow were invented.

Then being a widower, Tashey-thing married Gnyul-chul who was a fish, and said once as they came to a river he would carry her across on his back. Gnyul-chul did not like the idea and told Tashey-thing he ought to make a bridge. He made a bamboo one and just as they were nearly across, knowing she would annoy him, Gnyul-chul tumbled off his back and dropped in.

Then Tashey-thing became angry, and running down-stream he placed a bamboo fishing net (a yet) in the middle of the river. Catching her on the third day, he found that the arms and legs of Gnyul-chul had become fins, whilst the rest of her body was still that of a woman.

The moment Tashey-thing had caught her he made a fire and burnt her. Some fat fell from her body, and dropped on his thumb which he licked off, and he cursed fish saying that from that day it would be no sin for a human being to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day we can catch and eat fish, which we did not do when a fish was the wife of Tashey-thing.

So he was once more a widower, and he blessed us the Rong folk and said we should be as abundant as the bushes and trees in the jungle, and that until the monkey died out there, we should not die out.

After blessing us, Tashey-thing returned once more to the country of the Rum (heaven)."[65]

[65] Stocks, op. cit. p. 361 sq.

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the Rong was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said, 'You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[88] From these legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing, gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game, and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull was asleep; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds. The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

88. Gorer, op. cit. p. 88.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice.

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyō, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dön-dyō-chi-log, who is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 346.

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273 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment
796 back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they
273 did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious
273 effects ; for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 353.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples. 273 796

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods... The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs.... From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead.... Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74] [171]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the ngo-yong.... 796 782 773

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 188 sq.

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And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 288.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 176.

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"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance.

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple.

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 169.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 258.

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773 171 and cut it to pieces. Then he cleared the path for the waters so that they could flow freely into the sea.[96]

Indra-Vrtra corresponds to the Iranian Tishtar-Apaosha. After the fight between them both had raged with unabated fury for three days, he appeared weary and about to give in. Whereupon he cried, "If men would perform sacrifices, I still could win." They therefore offered the Haoma sacrifice because of which the hero gained strength and conquered the demon. Indra had also obtained superb strength through the drinking of Soma. In the Rong myths the stimulant Chi had to be offered to God in order that he might be passified and let the floods abate. As the serpent is again linked in another way with the flood, the snake king as leader of the river Rung-nyo and the subsequent flood;—we do not believe that the Rong have, in this case, taken over Vedic Hindu myths, but have handed down, independently, their own legends, which are very slightly influenced by modern Hinduism.

The second motif is the saving of a pair or of a few people, who either saved themselves by taking refuge on a mountain-top or in a vessel. We have acquainted ourselves earlier with the Rong legend (page 40 sq.). In Atharvaveda (19·39·8) this event is recorded as having occurred in the Himalayas, "There was the arrival of the vessel ; there was the peak of the Himalayas ; there was immortality in sight ; there grows the Kushta grass." Shatapatha Brahmana (1·8·1/10) describes how Manu was saved in a ship. According to the Vendidad of the Iranians, Jamshed (Yima) was locked up in a "vara" by Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme God, in order that he might be saved from the great flood.

As the myths of the flood occur among so many Asiatic peoples (in the Near, Middle and Far East) there is no conclusive parallel about the saving of mankind as described in the myths of the Rong and Indo-Iranians. These legends could be drawn from several sources.

783 In the cult of the Rong, the sacrificing of bulls plays an outstanding part. For both, the living (during illness) and for the dead (in funeral ceremonies), the bulls must lose their

96. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 133 sq.

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong-thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

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Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 60 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[113]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

113. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

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